

'Annie Get Your Gun' Begins

Morgan Hill Times

Lora Schraft / Posted May 7, 2009



Annie Oakley, played by Sandi Lewandowski, second from left, performs with her siblings Little Jake, Sallie, Nellie and Jessie, played by Dane Weber, Makena McElroy, Shannon Murphy, Brittini Bombino, and Foster Wilson, played by Stan Haugland, during dress rehearsals for the South Valley Civic Theater production of "Annie Get Your Gun" Wednesday night. www.svct.org



Lora Schraft

Sisters Dolly and Winnie Tate, played by Kris Heiser and Megan Griffin, perform during dress rehearsals.



Lora Schraft

Annie Oakley taught herself to use a gun and became a deadly shot.



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'Annie Get Your Gun': An energetic production

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by *Camille Bounds*

Irving Berlin's classic Broadway show "Annie Get Your Gun" rolled into the Morgan Hill Community Playhouse with unstinting energy. Berlin's genius – as always – stands alone. His music and lyrics are worth a trip to the theatre any day of the week.

The show opened on Broadway May 16, 1946 and played a record 1,147 sold-out performances that sent the standard for musicals to follow. "There's No Business Like Show Business" has become the anthem for the show business community and starred the incomparable Ethel Merman as the original Annie Oakley who has become an icon in the annals of this musical.

"Annie Get Your Gun" is a sassy, if not a too accurate story of Annie Oakley, an unbeatable sharpshooter that became famous worldwide for her expertise in the field. The story tells of her competitiveness and adoration of Frank Butler, star of Buffalo Bill's Wild West show.

The plot is fun and far-fetched, but moves at a fast pace with Berlin's magnificent songs and music gliding through the production. "Doin' What Comes Natur'Ily", "You Can't Get A Man With A Gun" "They Say It's Wonderful", "I Got The Sun In The Morning", "The Girl That I Marry" and the delightful "Anything You Can Do", are just a part of the libretto of marvelous music and lyrics that make up this uproarious show.

When you consider Berlin never learned to play the piano and the fact he could hardly read music makes his genius is even more incredible. He wrote more than 3,000 songs including "Alexander's Rag Time Band", "Blue Skies", "God Bless America" and the ever standard "White Christmas."

This production has an eight-piece orchestra, under the capable direction of Carol Harris, that delivers the solid support that makes or breaks a show.

The energetic cast led by Sandi Lewandowski as Annie Oakley and Rob Christopher as Frank Butler are the glue the holds the production together. Their timing and chemistry works. Stan Haugland as Foster Wilson and Robert Barham as Chief Sitting Bull bring in jovial enjoyable performances.

Stephanie Pintello's direction keeps things moving. Lighting, sound, sets and costumes were well done. Rob "I"'s choreography placed the energy and efforts of the chorus in the right places.

It ain't Broadway but its our own Morgan Hill Community Theatre giving it its all. "Annie Get Your Gun" might hit the bull's eye of your imagination and give an evening of amusement, relaxation and fantasy.

'Annie Get Your Gun'

WHERE: The Morgan Hill Community Playhouse, Monterey and Fifth Street, Morgan Hill.

WHEN: May 15, 16, 29, 30 and June 5, 6, at 8 p.m.; May 17 and 31 at 2 p.m.

DETAILS: (408) 782-0008.